

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6942

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSIO USEC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 1 OF 2 DUBLIN 1177

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECIN ETRD PFOR EEC

SUBJ: THE IRISH EC PRESIDENCY -- A BALANCE SHEET

SUMMARY: THIS CABLE ASSESSES FROM DUBLIN'S VANTAGE POINT THE EFFECT
OF IRISH EC PRESIDENCY ON AMERICAN INTERESTS, ON THE EC, AND ON
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IRELAND ITSELF. THE SOURCES AVAILABLE TO US SAY THE IRISH HAVE

DONE VERY MUCH BETTER THAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED, CONSIDERING THEIR MEAGRE RESOURCES. ENERGETIC FOREIGN MINISTER FITZGERALD AND A FEW SENIOR STAFF MEMBERS GET THE CREDIT. US/EC POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS WERE HELPFUL IN ACHIEVING SOME LIMITED GOALS BUT, MORE IMPORTANTLY, FOSTERED WHAT IS BECOMING A MORE REGULAR DIALOGUE. EUROPEAN POLITICAL INTEGRATION CLEARLY HAS NOT ADVANCED FAR ENOUGH TO "CARRY MUCH OF A LOAD," HOWEVER, AND WE TRY TO ASSESS THE WEAKNESSES AS WELL AS THE ACHIEVEMENTS. END SUMMARY.

1. EFFECT ON U.S. INTERESTS.

FROM DUBLIN WE SEE ONLY PART OF THE PICTURE. THE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER ADDRESSEES MAY WELL SEE A DIFFERENT PART. WE ALSO NOTE THAT THE SIX-MONTH IRISH PRESIDENCY (JANUARY 1 - JUNE 30, 1975) WAS IN LARGE PART DOMINATED BY A TOPIC WHICH HAD LESS TO DO WITH DIRECT AMERICAN INTERESTS THAN SEVERAL OTHER ISSUES: BRITISH "RENEGOTIATION" AND SUBSEQUENT DECISION TO REMAIN IN THE EC. NEVERTHELESS, SOME CONCLUSIONS SEEM CLEAR TO US, ON THE NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE SIDES.

(A) STARTING WITH THE POSITIVE, THE IRISH PRESIDENCY BROADENED THE PRECEDENT FOR US/EC POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS. TO SOME EXTENT THIS COULD BE CONSIDERED A HISTORICAL ACCIDENT, SINCE THE IRISH TOOK OVER THE PRESIDENCY AT A TIME WHEN THE US/EC DIALOGUE WAS JUST BEGINNING. BUT THE IRISH DID WORK HARD AT IT, AND WE DATE THAT FROM A "POLITICAL WILL" THAT WAS GENERATED FROM FONMIN FITZGERALD'S MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY DURING THE FIRST WEEK IN JANUARY. AS A RESULT, IRISH OFFICIALS GAVE US PROMPT BRIEFINGS AFTER EC MEETINGS AT ALL LEVELS AND TRANSMITTED OUR APPROACHES CAREFULLY TO THEIR EC COLLEAGUES. ACCORDING TO OUR CONTACTS, MOST EC MEMBERS FELT THAT THE IRISH WERE CONSCIENTIOUS, CAREFUL AND DID NOT USE THE PRESIDENCY FOR THEIR OWN BILATERAL PURPOSES. WE HOPE THAT THE USXEC POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS HAVE BECOME A PART OF THE EC GROWTH PROCESS AT AN EARLY STAGE IN THE COMMUNITY'S OWN EFFORTS TOWARD POLITICAL COOPERATION. OF ITSELF, THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN MUCH. ONE CAN POINT TO NEW PRECEDENTS IN ANALYZING ALMOST ANY EVENT, BUT THE PRECEDENTS ARE MEANINGLESS UNLESS THEY OPEN THE WAY TO SOME DEVELOPMENT OF SUBSTANCE. US/EC CONSULTATIONS COULD DEVELOP INTO SOMETHING OF REAL IMPORTANCE, OR THEY COULD BECOME AN EMPTY RITUAL.

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(B) FROM DUBLIN'S POINT OF VIEW, THE MOST IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENT OVER THE PAST 6 MONTHS HAS BEEN OUR ABILITY TO GET SOME MESSAGES OF REAL IMPORTANCE TO THE EC AS A WHOLE. THE MOST OBVIOUS EXAMPLE IS A MESSAGE ON VIET-NAM TRANSMITTED TO THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS AS THEY WERE BEGINNING A WEEKEND MEETING IN DUBLIN. WE ARE TOLD THAT THEY SPENT MUCH OF THE MEETING TALKING ABOUT THE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE, SO IT MUST HAVE HAD IMPACT. ON OTHER OCCASIONS, MESSAGES OF SUBSTANTIVE IMPORTANCE WERE TRANSMITTED ON THE MIDDLE

EAST, PORTUGAL, THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE, IEA ACTIVITIES,
COORDINATION ON UN MATTERS AND OTHER ISSUES.

(C) FURTHER, OUR APPROACHES TO THE EC GENERALLY CALLED FOR SOME SORT OF RESPONSE. CAPITALS COULD NOT WELL AVOID BEING SEIZED OF PROBLEMS OR REQUESTS PRESENTED IN THE US/EC CHANNEL. THE FACT THAT A MESSAGE COULD BE GOTTEN DIRECTLY TO NINE FOREIGN MINISTRIES ALLOWED SOME SHORT-CIRCUITING OF BUREAUCRACY, ALTHOUGH THIS WAS NOT NECESSARILY HELPFUL BECAUSE THE EXPERIENCE OF POLITICAL COOPERATION AMONG THE NINE IS STILL INCHOATE.

(D) ON THE OTHER HAND, EC RESPONSES TO US WERE OFTEN UNCLEAR AND TOOK ACCOUNT OF THE FACT THAT SOME MEMBERS INSIST ON SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES RATHER THAN THROUGH THE PRESIDENCY. OFTEN THESE RESPONSES LOOKED LIKE LOWEST-COMMON-DENOMINATOR EFFORTS. IT SEEMED TO US, THEREFORE, THAT CONSULTATIONS THROUGH THE IRISH WERE MORE USEFUL IN CALLING ATTENTION TO AND CLARIFYING OUR POSITION AND THUS PREVENTING EC ACTION THAN IN ACHIEVING IT. AS EXAMPLES, APPROACHES ON THE MIDDLE EAST, CYPRUS AND VIET-NAM MAY WELL HAVE HEADED OFF EUROPEAN INITIATIVES THAT COULD HAVE CAUSED PROBLEMS. WE DID NOT SEE A COMPARABLE NUMBER OF EXAMPLES OF CLEAR POSITIVE STEPS IN RESPONSE TO US APPROACHES BUT POSITIVE RESPONSES WILL, WE BELIEVE, BECOME POSSIBLE AS THE EC POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM GROPES ITS WAY TOWARD MATURITY. THERE WERE SEVERAL USEFUL BEGINNINGS. THE CAREFUL HANDLING OF THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE BY THE IRISH CHAIRMAN HAS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT US SENSITIVITIES WITHOUT THUS FAR FALLING INTO THE TRAP OF POLITICIZATION OF PLO PRESENCE. ADDITIONALLY, WE SEE SIGNS OF MATURITY AS A POLITICAL GROUPING IN THE EC'S ABILITY TO SHAPE AND TO HOLD TO A COMMON POSITION IN CSCE AND IN THE ENERGY PREPARATORY CONFERENCE.

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R 050925Z JUL 75
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(E) THE FREQUENT BRIEFINGS BY THE IRISH GAVE US A FAIR GENERAL PICTURE OF EC THINKING ON POLITICAL MATTERS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE PICTURE WAS SOMETIMES FUZZY. AS A RULE, EC POLITICAL CONSULTATION MEETINGS HAVE NOT TAKEN MANY DECISIONS, AND THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE SENSE OF THE ACTION (OR NON-ACTION) IS TO KNOW WHO IS ARGUING WITH WHOM. THE IRISH APPARENTLY HAD CONSIDERED IT DISLOYAL TO CONFIDENTIAL

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THEIR FELLOW MEMBERS TO GIVE US COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY BYPLAY. IT WAS NOT VERY USEFUL TO BE TOLD THAT PARTICIPANTS IN THE MEETING DISCUSSED A TOPIC AT LENGTH AND TOOK NO DECISION. WE CONCLUDE, THEREFORE, THAT US/EC BRIEFING SESSIONS BY THE PRESIDENCY WILL NOT REPLACE FRANK BRIEFINGS FROM CAPITALS THAT ARE ACCUSTOMED TO GOOD BILATERAL CONTACTS WITH US.

(F) WE FOUND THAT THE MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND FOREIGN MINISTER FITZGERALD IN EARLY JANUARY WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN CREATING NOT ONLY A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP BUT FOSTERED A "POLITICAL WILL TO CONSULT" THAT WAS QUICKLY TRANSMITTED TO LOWER ECHELONS IN THE IRISH FOREIGN MINISTRY.

2. EFFECT OF IRISH PRESIDENCY ON THE EC.

ALTHOUGH THERE WERE PROBLEMS IN THE IRISH PRESIDENCY, IT WAS MUCH MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED, BEARING IN MIND IRELAND'S SMALL SIZE AND THIN RESOURCES.

(A) THE MAIN IRISH ASSET WAS FOREIGN MINISTER GARRET FITZGERALD AND THREE SENIOR FOREIGN OFFICE COLLEAGUES HAND-PICKED BY HIM: PERMANENT SECRETARY PAUL KEATING, DEPUTY SECRETARY EAMONN GALLAGHER, AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS NOEL DORR. AS MOST ADDRESSEES KNOW, FITZGERALD IS A GIFTED CHARACTER. IN ADDITION TO BEING BRILLIANT, HE IS ENORMOUSLY ENERGETIC, LIKEABLE, AND USUALLY OBJECTIVE. FEW FOREIGN MINISTERS AROUND THE WORLD MEASURE UP TO HIS STANDARD, AND WE HAVE NOT SEEN ANY OTHER INDIVIDUAL IN IRELAND WHO COULD FILL FITZGERALD'S SHOES. WE AGREE WITH A SENIOR EC COMMISSION OFFICIAL WHO WAS QUOTED IN A RECENT USEC BRUSSELS TELEGRAM AS SAYING HE HAD NEVER SEEN SUCH A BRILLIANT CHAIARMANSHIP OF THE COUNCIL AND THAT FITZGERALD'S LEADERSHIP WOULD BE SOREL MISSED. ON THE EUROPEAN SCENE, FITZGERALD NOW SEEMS TO HAVE ACHIEVED A REPUTATION COMPARABLE ONLY TO THAT OF GASTON THORN.

(B) FITZGERALD ACHIEVED SOME MINOR EC LANDMARKS THAT ANOTHER MIGHT HAVE FOUND DIFFICULT. HE DID EVERYTHING HE COULD TO BOOST THE STATUS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, APPEARING THERE PERSONALLY TO ANSWER POLITICAL QUESTIONS. HE ALSO BROUGHT OFF THE FIRST SCHEDULED EC MEETING AT A NATIONAL CAPITAL THAT COMBINED POLITICAL AND COUNCIL BUSINESS. TO ANYONE OUTSIDE THE EC, THIS MAY SEEM A DIM MILESTONE, BUT IT HAS SIGNIFICANCE TO EUROPEANS.

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KC) MANY OF THE IRISH DEALING WITH EC MATTERS LACKED CONFIDENCE AND WERE HAMPERED BY SOME THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS INHERITED FROM THEIR PREVIOUSLY CLOSE FRENCH TIES. AS ONE EXAMPLE, THE IRISH SINCERELY BELIEVE THAT EC PROCEEDINGS MUST REACH "A CERTAIN STAGE OF MATURITY" BEFORE THEY CAN BE DISCUSSED WITH THE US. THEOLOGICALLY, THIS MAY BE A SOUND ARGUMENT. IN PRACTICE, IT CAN LEAD TO US/EC CONTACTS THAT ARE TOO SUPERFICIAL TO SUPPLEMENT TRADITIONAL BILATERAL RELATIONS. WE THINK, HOWEVER, THAT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES HELPED THEM SHED A LOT OF THEIR COMPLICATED RESERVATIONS TOWARD CONSULTATIONS WITH THE U.S.

3. EFFECT ON IRELAND.

THE EFFECT OF THE EC PRESIDENCY ON THE IRISH HOST COUNTRY IS MARKED.

(A) THE PRESIDENCY REINFORCED IRELAND'S OWN COMMITMENT TO EUROPEAN INTEGRATION. IRISH INTEREST IN THE EC HAD ALWAYS BEEN HIGH, BUT WE THINK THE EARLY INTEREST WAS LARGELEY A RESULT OF THE SIMPLE ECONOMIC REASONING THAT IRELAND WOULD BE BETTER OFF INSIDE THE COMMUNITY AND EC MEMBERSHIP WOULD DIMINISH DEPENDENCE ON THE UK. AT THIS POINT, THERE IS SOMETHING LIKE A REAL LOYALTY TO THE COMMUNITY ON THE PART OF GOVERNMENT LEADERS AND MOST OF THE PUBLIC. THERE IS NO DOUBT, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT IRELAND WOULD HAVE TRIED TO

REMAIN IN THE COMMUNITY EVEN IF THE BRISH HAD WITHDRAWN, ALTHOUGH
THIS WOULD HAVE MEANT AN ENORMOUS ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT.

(B) FITZGERALD'S WORK IN THE EC PRESIDENCY APPEARS TO HAVE RAISED
HIS LOCAL POPULARITY, WHICH WAS ALREADY HIGH. ANY IRISHMAN WATCHING
HIM ON AN EC PLATFORM FEELS AN UNDERSTANDABLE PRIDE. IT IS NOT AT ALL
CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT FITZGERALD'S PERSONAL POPULARITY CAN BE TRANS-
LATED INTO A SHOT AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S JOB, WHICH IS THE ONLY
PROMOTION STILL LEFT OPEN TO HIM. WE THINK IT IS AT LEAST POSSIBLE
THAT HE WILL SEEK SOME MEANINGFUL STATESMAN'S POSITION OUTSIDE OF
IRELAND IN A MULTI-NATIONAL FRAMEWORK. EVEN HIS CLOSEST ADVISORS,
HOWEVER, CLAIM THAT HE HAS NEVER DISCUSSED FUTURE AMBITIONS OR
PLANS.

(C) FINALLY, AS IRELAND RECEDES FROM THE PRESIDENCY TO BEING JUST
ANOTHER MEMBER OF "THE CLUB" (AND A SMALL AND THE ONLY NEUTRAL ONE
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AT THAT), WE BELIEVE THAT IRISH IDENTIFICATION WITH EUROPE
IS AN IRREVERSIBLE FACT. IN THE SAME MANNER AS IRISH FOREIGN
POLICY OF THE FIFTIES WAS FIRMLY GROUNDED IN A BELIEF IN THE
UNITED NATIONS, SO ALSO WE BELIEVE THAT "EUROPEAN IDENTITY"
WILL BE THE TOUCHSTONE OF IRISH FOREIGN RELATIONS FOR THE REMAINDER
OF THE DECADE. THIS MIGHT WELL BE AT THE EXPENSE OF THEIR PREVIOUS
WESTWARD LOOK TOWARD THE UNITED STATES. AS FITZGERALD NOTED IN
HIS FAREWELL TOAST TO AMBASSADOR MOORE, IRELAND HAS LONG HAD CLOSE
AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH US. HE LOOKED FORWARD TO CONTINUING
CLOSE RELATIONS BUT FORESAW THAT THEY MIGHT BE "DIFFERENT FROM
BEFORE."

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